



The titles of Geckler's pieces "are lyrics from different songs. The one at COLA is an Of Montreal song. In the song, the lead singer has secluded himself. The song talks about wanting to shut the door and be alone, which is, I think, the experience that comes from visiting and interacting with The Cube," explained curator Erin Christovale.



Arcadia High School

## Q&A with COLA Fellow Megan Geckler



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JUNE 22, 2016

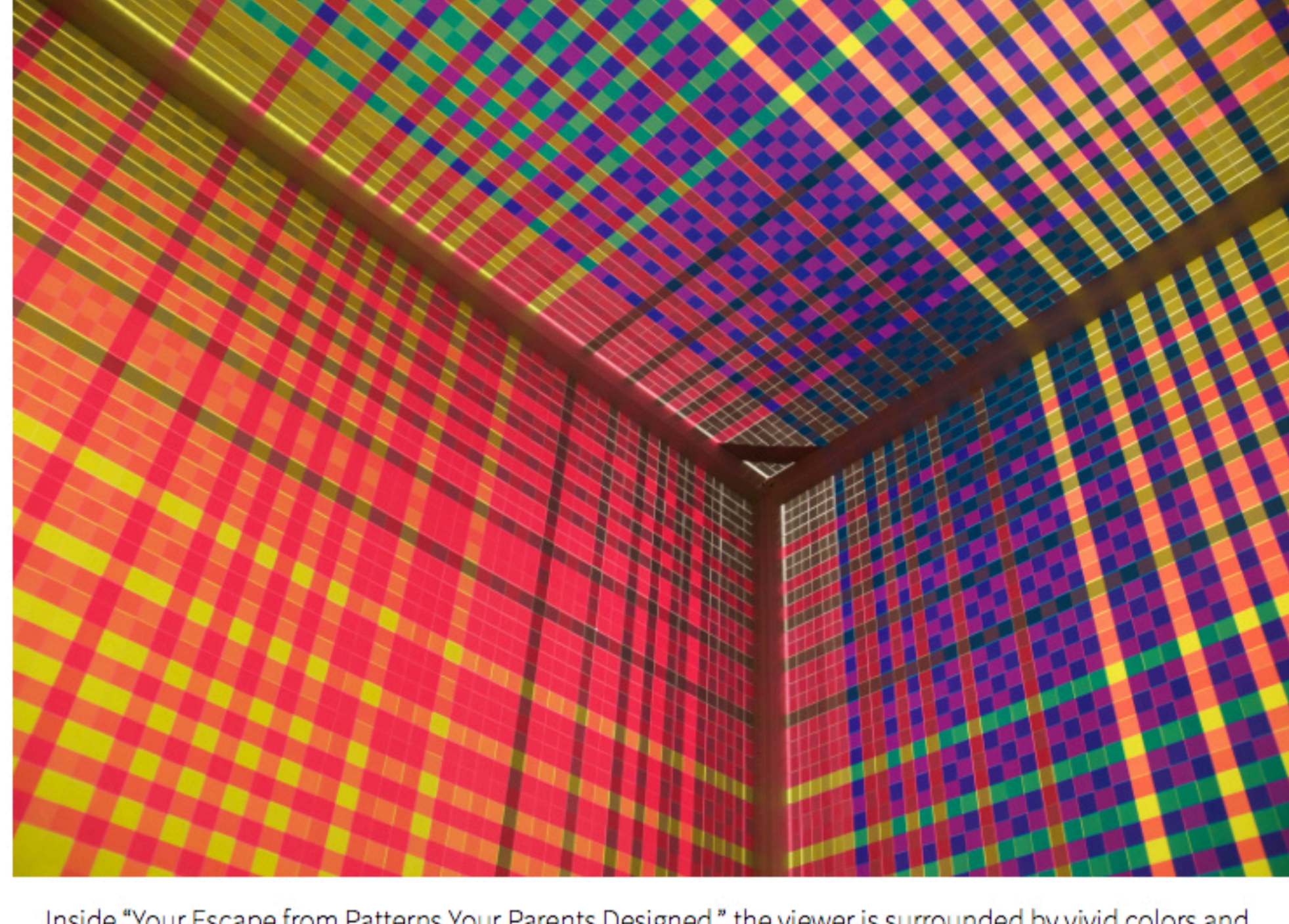
In a gallery featuring a sampling of Los Angeles' most prominent mid-career visual artists, Megan Geckler's artwork stands out with its striking colors and audience accessibility at the 2016 COLA exhibition.

COLA features 12 artists, each of whom is awarded a ten-thousand dollar grant, with which they are expected to produce unique original work. Artists work across various mediums (film, literature, sculpture, photography, etc.) and have "been in L.A. for a few years, have kind of established themselves in the art community here, and are interested in making new, bold, and innovative work," said Erin Christovale, one of the gallery's curators. This is COLA's 19th annual exhibition.

Geckler, who has produced work at site-specific locations throughout L.A., and internationally, was granted the COLA fellowship last year, and has contributed two well-received pieces of work to this year's exhibition.

The Pennsylvania native's main installation is a 120-inch x 120-inch cube, which, with the exception of the basic structure, is made entirely from neon-colored flagging tape. The piece is officially titled "Your Escape from Patterns Your Parents Designed," but has been fondly dubbed "The Cube." The creation is a small room, bare except for a single wooden bench. Audiences are welcome to enter The Cube through a fully functional door, which is also a part of the intricate flagging tape design. The large installation is placed in the center of the gallery floor, and is the only participatory piece showcased this year.

View the inside of The Cube for yourself with our 360 photo here.



Inside "Your Escape from Patterns Your Parents Designed," the viewer is surrounded by vivid colors and pixel-like patterns. The effect is surprisingly tranquilizing.

"All of the creative shapes, experiences, and installations she is able to make with the flagging tape is always really interesting," said Christovale. "The bright colors are really inviting."

HS Insider had the opportunity to catch up with Geckler, who is currently installing her latest piece at LAX.

**Q: How would you describe your work?**

**A:** It's on the intersection of OpArt and minimalism, meaning that it relies on simplistic form, so the immersive sculpture that's at the COLA show—the cube, which is the most basic of the three-dimensional forms—so in that way it relates to minimalism. However, when you look at it, I think that there's so much aesthetic activity happening on the surface that it resembles OpArt in that it's something really engaging to look at, it has a mathematical pattern to it, it comes together and makes an image that is very much entertainment for your eyes.

**Q: How do your pieces reflect who you are as an artist and a person?**

**A:** The fact that I have a lot of OCD. [laughs] No, just kidding. I don't know why, but I think that other people think that I'm very organized. I am. There's a lot of order in the work, but I don't think it's so much because of me; I think it's because if the work looks less organized or, shall we say, sloppy, it wouldn't be as visually arresting, because I think when you walk into that space, it kind of looks like a computer threw up on that cube. You know? And computers aren't messy. So I try to make it look like maybe no one made that thing, it just kind of happened, but when you get up on it, you realize it's all about weaving the tape and then you realize how much work must have gone into this.

**Q: Typically, your inspiration for a piece is derived from the space in which you will be working. For COLA, it seems you created your own space. What influenced the site-specific piece on display at that gallery?**

**A:** This whole grant for COLA was pitched so that I no longer had to be reliant on the architectural elements, and the nuances and quirks of the spaces anymore, because I would get invitations to show my work at places that don't have interesting architecture. Many galleries are basically white cubes. The lack of architectural inspiration pretty much results in a conceptual impact for me. So, for this work I wanted to investigate and develop artwork that was not site-specific, more sculptural. [For the COLA piece,] I wanted to know where the line is between sculpture and installation. With this work, I was trying to make it more democratic and easier for me to show my artwork.

**Q: What do you think is unique about your artwork in comparison to the other work at COLA?**

**A:** I think that my work is definitely more of a blend of art and design than some of the other artwork in the show.

**Q: As a native of Pennsylvania, but a longtime resident of L.A., how do you feel your artwork represents this city?**

**A:** I think the diversity of the color, the bright colors, and not being afraid of a lot of that is uniquely Los Angeles. I think in L.A. we're very,

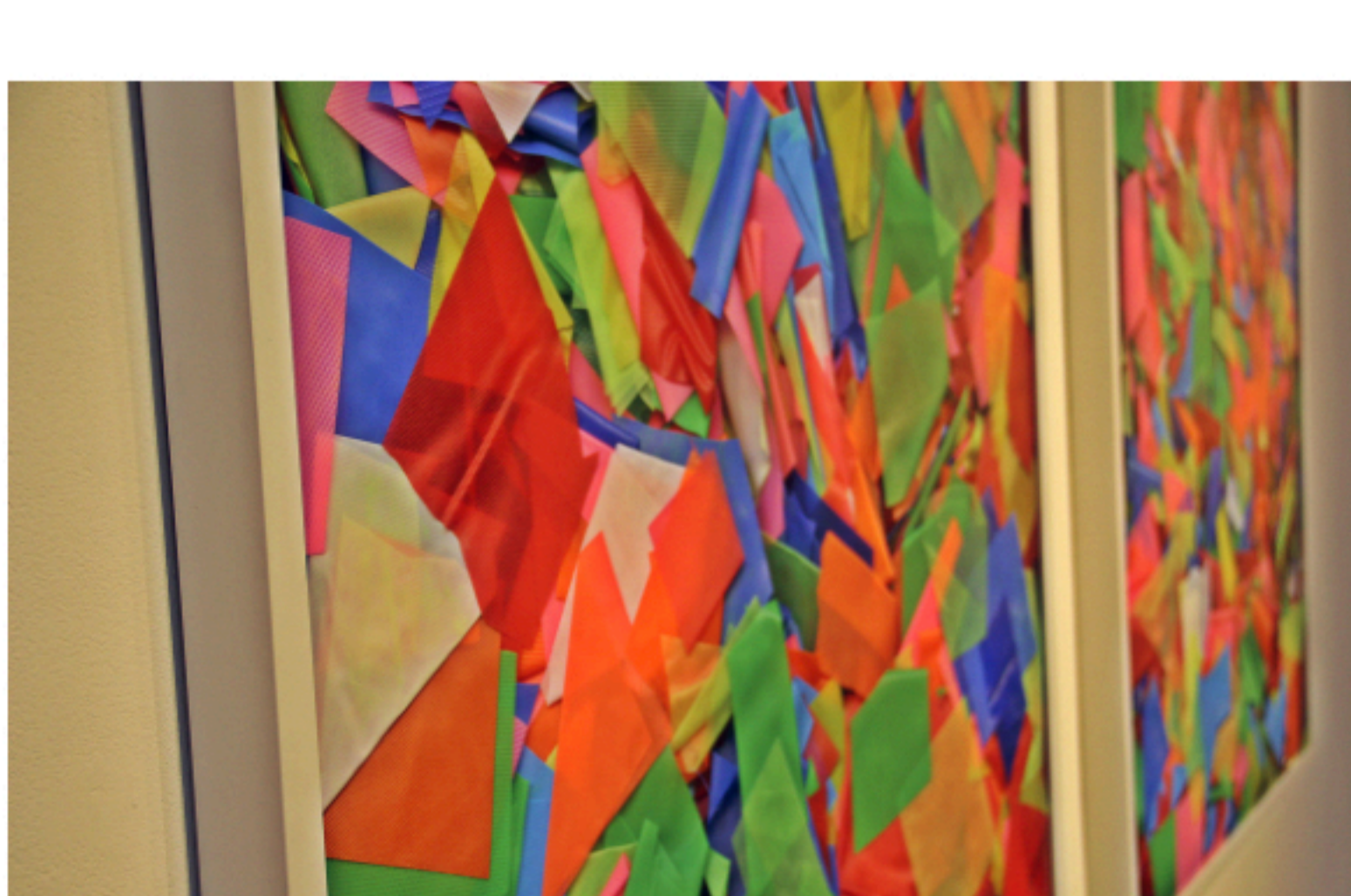
very used to everything being very, almost frenetic, to the point of being distracting. I think the amount of activity going on around you, and the amount of color, culture, and unique individuals and the diversity of the city, I think all of that stuff plays into the range of colors and the amount of visual activity that is in my work.

**Q: How do the bright colors you use reflect the responses you hope to elicit from your audience?**

**A:** I'm a big fan of art for everybody. I go out of my way to make artwork that is accessible to everybody who sees it. I really want to catch you from the second you walk in the door, attack you with bright color, and draw you towards my artwork. That's a really good way of roping people in: kind of showing them something unexpected. Have them enter the space and be drawn towards the artwork by the bright colors, the sense of order, the design. It has the colors of joy and celebration. I want the work to be celebratory.

**Q: You've taught and you've had exhibitions at schools. What do you gain from working with or for students? What do students gain from you?**

**A:** I've worked hand in hand with students. I think they got a crash course on how to work with site-specific art because I was asking them for all sorts of minute observations and measurements. A lot of kids that are studying, maybe, have never actually had to make a piece of art. They look at it in museums and they've read about it in books, but they've never gotten out a drill and actually drilled a bunch of holes in the wall and hung up paintings. Working with me, they understood how a model is made, how things are actually attached, how to install and maintain a piece of artwork, how to think about the piece of artwork. They learn to communicate with people who know nothing about art who people who know a lot about art. They get that from me, and I get enthusiasm, boundless optimism, and a lot of help from the students. They were completely dedicated to the project, and at no point did their dedication waiver. That was really fulfilling for me as an artist.



#0005 and #0145, sublimated dye prints on di-bond aluminum, also show off Geckler's use of eye-catching colors and unusual materials.